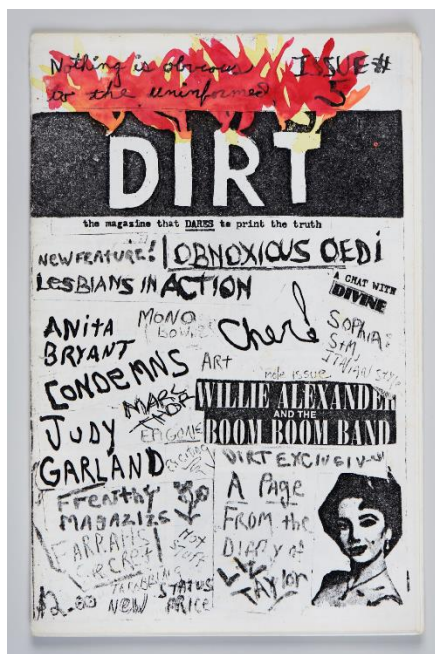


Press Release

Brooklyn Museum Presents *Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists Who Make Zines*, the First-Ever Museum Show Dedicated to Zines by Artists in North America

The monumental show encompasses more than 800 objects examining how artists have used the medium of zines over the past half century.

On view November 17, 2023–March 31, 2024



This exhibition explores the largely unexamined, yet vibrant aesthetic practice of zines and is the first major museum show dedicated to zines made by artists from Canada, Mexico, and the United States over the past fifty years. A zine, short for “fanzine,” is a self-published booklet of original or appropriated texts and images, usually made with a copy machine. Zines have been widely used to create and foster communities outside of dominant culture since the early 1970s, when more affordable reproduction technologies like the photocopier became widely accessible. With over 800 works on view, the exhibition documents the zine’s relationship to a range of avant-garde practices and intersections with other mediums, including painting, drawing, collage, photography, performance, sculpture, video, and film. From conceptual art to punk and street culture to queer and feminist practices, this canon-expanding exhibition interrogates hierarchies between media and features artworks by nearly one hundred artists.

Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists Who Make Zines is organized by Branden W. Joseph, Frank Gallipoli Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art, department of Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University, and Drew Sawyer, Philip and Edith Leonian Curator of Photography, Brooklyn Museum. The exhibition will be on view in the Museum’s Morris A. and Meyer Schapiro Wing.

Brooklyn Museum

“When this project was initiated in 2019, its working title was ‘An Incomplete History of Zines by Artists.’ We knew that a comprehensive survey or canon of such publications would be impossible due to the sheer volume, variety, and often private and anti-institutional nature of zines,” says Sawyer. “Yet, we still felt that artists’ zines deserved to be the subject of an expansive exhibition, not only because the printed medium has become increasingly popular and relevant in the last decade but also because artists themselves have already been exploring these histories and legacies.”

“This exhibition will be the first to look at zines as a distinct medium within the lineage of art history,” adds Joseph. “At the same time, valorizing and including zines makes the history of contemporary art look different—introducing a host of different figures, putting familiar figures into different contexts, and moving marginalized figures to positions of centrality. Far from nostalgic or outmoded, the photocopied and printed zine remains a vibrant means of artistic expression. I’m excited to have been able to work with the Brooklyn Museum, which is the perfect host for this project.”

Copy Machine Manifestos is organized roughly chronologically and by communities and networks, beginning in the early 1970s with examples of mail art among specific groups in Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver, and other North American cities. This section, titled **The Correspondence Scene, 1970–1980**, features some of the first artists to incorporate zines into their artistic practice, such as Anna Banana, John Dowd, Joey Terrill, Les Petites Bonbons, and Jack Vargas, among others. The exhibition also explores **The Punk Explosion, 1975–1990**, with zines, records, film, and photography from the 1970s and 1980s punk movement. During this time artists like Lisa Baumgartner, Barbara Ess, G. B. Jones, Bruce LaBruce, Raymond Pettibon, Carolee Schneemann, and David Wojnarowicz used the photocopier to expand the typical iconography of the punk zine and challenge institutions and access to distribution channels.

Queer and Feminist Undergrounds, 1987–2000, shows how these marginalized communities used zines as a way to establish control over their own representation. Artists such as Vaginal Davis, Felix Endara, Johanna Fateman, Cory Roberts-Auli, Mirha-Soleil Ross, and Ho Tam published zines sharing not only personal experiences and interests but also information on homophobia, transphobia, sexism, racism, white supremacy, ableism, HIV/AIDS activism, and classism. A highlight of this section is the relationship between zines and video. A pronounced interaction of underground and mainstream artists came to light in the 1990s and early 2000s as the production of zines moved into art galleries and alternative spaces. This is explored in the section **Subcultural Topologies, 1990–2010**, which includes the production of zines and work in other media around Alleged Gallery on New York’s Lower East Side, the artist-run space Temístocles 44 in Mexico City, and the ad hoc meeting places of El Chino in Guadalajara, among other spaces and practices. This section situates these practices in conversation with artists and zine-makers who drew upon vernacular forms of cultural production typically outside or at the margins of contemporary art, including graffiti, skateboarding, hip-hop, street fashion, and even vernacular architecture. Notable artists represented from this period include Beverly Buchanan, Susan Cianciolo, Mark Gonzales, Ari Marcopoulos, and Frederick Weston.

The section **Critical Promiscuity, 2000–2012**, details how zines continued to be relevant media for queer-identifying artists who first came onto the scene in the late ’90s and were now honing their artistic practices in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Many of the zine makers at this time, such as Terence Koh, LTRR, Brontez Purnell, and Paul Mpagi

Sepuya, used their publications to distribute art among their peers as well as to wider audiences. The art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson has used the term “critical promiscuity” to describe the collective LTTR’s collaborative and shapeshifting format as well as its capacious representations of sex and gender. In addition to collectively editing and producing their zine *LTTR*, the group also organized screenings, exhibitions, performances, read-ins, and workshops.

The exhibition concludes with **A Continuing Legacy, 2010–present**, focusing on the vibrant present-day practice of artists’ zine-making activity, establishing it as central to the current artistic landscape. In addition to forming part of established artists’ gallery practice, zines have been, and continue to be, an important catalyst for social change by creating new communities and publics through shared networks, readership, and audiences. Zines continue to challenge the status quo, push critical discourses, and give people control over their own stories and representations, allowing them to come together and find common ground and shared values. Some contemporary artists featured in this section include Neta Bomani, Lizania Cruz, Maggie Lee, Devin N. Morris, and Kandis Williams.

Accompanying Publication

The publication produced to accompany the exhibition, copublished with Phaidon Press, situates the history of the zine within the lineage of the visual arts, adding an important, but as yet unexamined, chapter in the understanding of the contemporary zine’s evolution and its role in contemporary art and culture. This richly illustrated volume, with over 800 full-color images, foregrounds the aesthetic qualities of zines and places them in dialogue with artists’ work in other media. It includes texts by the curators and specially commissioned essays by Gwen Allen, Julia Bryan-Wilson, Tavia Nyong’o, Alexis Salas, and Mimi Thi Nguyen, as well as an extensive section featuring biographies of all the artists and collectives represented in the project.

The publication will be exclusively available through the Brooklyn Museum Shop during the first few months of the presentation.

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Leadership support for this exhibition is provided by Shelley Fox Aarons and Philip E. Aarons, and by



The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

IMAGE: Mark Morrisroe (American, 1959–1989) and Lynelle White (American). *Dirt*, no. 5, 1975/76. Photocopy with watercolor, saddle stitched, 8 1/2 x 5 1/2 in. (21.5 x 14 cm). © The Estate of Mark Morrisroe (EMM)